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ABSTRACT

Numerous approaches to behavior management in schools have been offered but many of these rely on strategies or procedures. A different kind of approach, which focuses on essential principles, is offered here. It includes a range of suggestions, but application of its principles depends on the particular school and community. The position adopted here is that human functioning is too complex to be governed by a few definite rules--that in any situation, those who make decisions about organization, procedures, and arrangements must constantly monitor and think about what is happening and then make the appropriate adjustments. The plan opens with an overview of how to conceptualize behavior problems, followed by the importance of the respect for authority. It explores the nature of respect, implications of the respect for authority, and the mix of authority and autonomy. The process is based on four processes--teaching, counseling, supervision, and control--which, together, help students develop respect for the authority structure. It explores the methods of teaching, ways to teach good behavior, and provides a detailed explanation of the importance of control. The program stresses the centrality of the relationship between the representatives of authority and the subordinates. (RJM)

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# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS:

## *SUMMARY OVERVIEW*

1. The aim of this approach: respect for authority.

2. Basis - a cognitive approach: internalising values.

3. Processes: teaching, counselling, supervision, control.

4. Developing the program:

   4.1 description of the present situation, including problems; provision for gathering information.

   4.2 determining and stating the values which will be inculcated.

   4.3 types of interventions - see Fig. 1.

   4.4 dealing with disruptive incidents: immediate and follow-up strategies.

   4.5 allocating responsibility for groups of students - gathering information, planning, implementation of interventions.

5. Teacher-student relationships.

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# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

There are many approaches to the management of behaviour in schools, a variety of strategies and procedures have been devised and recommended by several authors. Most approaches have been demonstrated to be useful in some situations. Why then add to this literature? The approach described here is somewhat different from most of the other systems which tend to recommend certain things which should be done, whereas the approach described here concentrates on essential principles. How these principles are actually put into effect in a particular school is a matter for that school community to decide. A range of suggestions are included here, but decisions concerning the details of implementation are best made by the people most closely involved. This position is taken because human functioning is so complex; there are few definite rules; in any situation those making decisions about organisation, procedures and arrangements must constantly monitor and think about what is happening, and make adjustments where necessary.

## The starting point: the problem

*Ways of conceptualising behaviour problems*

It is worth thinking carefully about the existing situation before any changes are made to existing behaviour management strategies. This analysis should include an examination of the problem behaviours and the procedures used to deal with them. Behaviour problems which occur in schools can be thought of in several ways. Students who behave inappropriately can be thought of as having learned to do the wrong thing; this is one way to conceptualise the situation. But equally, they can be seen as having failed to learn to do the right thing. They may never have been taught the appropriate way of behaving in various situations. Yet another approach is to see their inappropriate behaviour as resulting from internal forces which drive them to behave inappropriately. They may feel violent dislike for aspects of their school experience and therefore express these feelings by way of violent, negative behaviour. These are some examples of ways in which inappropriate behaviour can be conceptualised, and there are numerous others. The approach taken here to the conceptualisation of problem behaviour in the school setting arises from the observation that many students who display problem behaviour express the view that there is nothing wrong with what they do or have done. Have you had the response from an offender: "so what"; "it doesn't matter". It is not claimed that this is the only possible or valid way to think about problem behaviour, but there does seem to be some evidence to support this view. For many of the difficult students nothing matters; certainly the things that are important to you and I, are not important to them. As teachers, we believe that learning and academic achievement is important: many students seem not to be convinced. We believe one should be polite, kindly and helpful to other people: many difficult youngsters seem to believe that it doesn't

matter if they offend or injure other people, or deprive them of their possessions: that old lady didn't need the money she had in her handbag!

This state of affairs can be conceptualised in terms of authority. At least a proportion of difficult students (there may be other valid conceptualisations) have little respect for authority. This statement needs further elaboration. First, the issue of authority. This has not been a popular topic in recent years. Researchers have been more concerned with autonomy rather than authority and there are perhaps good reasons for this, but the view which is basic to this approach to behaviour management is that authority is essential to civilised living. Without some form of authority there is chaos.

Authority can be thought of as that which influences or directs behaviour. There are, or have been, various bases of or approaches to, authority. In just and harmonious societies, authority is based on sound ethical and moral principles. In dictatorships the basis of authority is an individual's whim. In our own western culture authority has at times been based on things like physical force or social status, which are surely somewhat questionable. We presently live in an age in which traditional authorities are being quite seriously questioned, and in some cases their influence reduced. The professions, for instance, cannot assume that their views will be widely accepted. This would seem to be the situation in relation to the way in which teachers are regarded. If it is correct that the influence of traditional authorities is being reduced, it is worth considering which groups in society do retain influence. What forces in our society are influencing and perhaps directing behaviour? Because as we consider the issue of authority in schools, we need to be aware of the factors influencing the views and behaviours of students.

Unfortunately we probably have to admit that authority in schools was traditionally based, at least to some extent, on questionable things like physical force. What then should be the basis for authority? Underlying any system of authority are certain values, beliefs, and principles. Dictatorships would seem to be based on the simple might is right principle. In our system a belief that there should be evidence and sound reasons for decisions is one important factor. Most of us would accept the authority of the scientific method; the expectation that evidence can be produced to support claims being made, but with the understanding that new evidence may be found which will indicate a change in direction. A range of values and beliefs concerning human beings and indeed other creatures, are also important elements underpinning our approach to authority. Again most of us would agree on the sanctity of human life. It is difficult to talk about authority without considering issues concerning values and beliefs, but values and beliefs can themselves be subjected to analysis, which takes us into the area of moral reasoning, and the works of people like Kohlberg.

It is basic to this approach to behaviour management in schools, that the basis of authority should be values, beliefs and principles which are consistent with high levels of moral reasoning. The absence of this basis for authority would seem to be one important reason for the disrupted situation we presently experience in our society. Traditional authorities which may have been less than perfect have been eroded, and they have not been replaced with authority based on sound moral principles; rather,

our young people are being strongly influenced by social forces which are not always entirely desirable.

## The aim: respect for authority

The basic aim of the present approach to behaviour management is therefore to develop respect for authority, which also requires clarification. First, authority refers to the set of values and principles, rather than to individuals. Teachers and other authority figures in society are representatives of authority; they have authority vested in them because of their position. So respect for authority means that those who show respect, demonstrate respect for the values, beliefs and principles which the authority figure represents.

This apparently simple aim, that is, to develop respect for authority, has several important implications. It is clearly a two-way street. If we are to expect students to show respect for authority, we, the authority figures, must show respect for the students, and also for the basic principles which are the basis of our authority. Do what I say, not what I do, is doomed to failure. To tell children to be honest if we are not honest ourselves is obviously unacceptable. The authority which applies in the group being considered, in this case the school, is clearly based in the set of values, beliefs and principles considered to be of great importance by that group, and this set of values applies to all members of the group, including, perhaps we could say especially, the authority figures.

## The nature of respect

Sometimes when folks talk about respect for authority the idea is presented in a context which implies or even specifically states, that respect will be obtained by force. This is a contradiction in terms. Respect must be a spontaneous thing, arising from the inner essence of the individual. We need to consider what might be meant by respect. It can usefully be linked to one the most fundamental aspects of human functioning. One thing that we all do, all the time, is to evaluate. We are constantly making judgements which can be seen as similar to rating a particular object on a scale. As we evaluate, we probably don't think in terms of a scale, but that is a useful way of explaining the sort of thing we are doing. We rate objects, people, activities, as compared with other things. Some things, objects, people, activities, etc we evaluate highly and positively. These are the things which we hold in high regard. Here we see the link with respect. Respect can be explained as meaning that we evaluate that item "high positive". If I respect your judgement concerning a particular issue, I consider, I evaluate, your judgement to be very sound concerning that issue.

## Respect for authority: implications

Promoting respect for authority means that we wish to see students evaluating those principles which we consider should influence and direct our thinking and behaviour

in a positive way. The teacher gives the instruction to study this particular section of work carefully; the principle here is that academic achievement is important. Students who evaluate academic achievement positively, and who can see that the teacher's instruction makes sense are likely to follow the instruction. This aim of developing respect for authority obviously has numerous implications, some of which have already been suggested, for instance that the essential principles on which authority is based must apply to all members of the community.

The example just given suggests another: 'The teacher's instruction makes sense'. It is not just a matter of valuing academic achievements. The teacher must be able to convey to students how the activity they are required to undertake is related to learning. There is a link between the valuing of learning and competence as an instructor. This is but one example which indicates that developing respect for authority has many implications. This is one reason why the supportive school environment approach is particularly useful. Behaviour management cannot be separated from many, perhaps all, other aspects of school experience.

## Authority & autonomy

Promoting respect for authority does not mean that we intend to produce students who never think for themselves; who have to ask a teacher before they do anything. That would represent authoritarianism. The position presented here intends that individuals internalise principles and develop the capacity to direct their behaviour by those principles. It is therefore important that individual students have appropriate opportunity for exercising choice and making decisions. The important consideration is that they have appropriate opportunity for doing so, which means that they are capable of making sensible decisions in the situation because the situation is one which they can understand and cope with. This is a gradual learning process. Children have to learn to choose and to make decisions, which of course has important implications for adults in the situation.

## The process: developing respect for the guiding principles

How might we develop in students respect for those principles which are the essence of the authority structure? This system of behaviour management is based on four processes which together contribute to this development. These are: **teaching, counselling, supervision and control.** These four are all essential components of the behaviour management program. They are not separate; they go together, and many activities in the school involve aspects of all four at once. Normal classroom teaching involves aspects of all four in relation to behaviour management, and the organisational, administrative arrangements across the whole school also contribute to these processes. Each topic will be considered separately, but it is important to remember that they are closely related. Another feature of this approach to behaviour management is that details of implementation must be decided by those who carry the responsibility for behaviour management. Recipes of themselves are inadequate. Each of the four processes will be discussed, and suggestions made. Having considered

these suggestions, each school community needs then to decide the details of the program they will put in place in their school.

## Teaching

How might we teach students in a school, respect for the principles and values we consider desirable, and further, how might we teach students to behave in ways consistent with these values and principles?

As a starting point we might examine the present situation. In any school we are obviously not starting from scratch in relation to behaviour management; this has always been an important part of the school program. Consequently in each school community behaviour management is part of the culture which to some extent is unique to that school community. It must therefore be recognised that any changes to the behaviour management program involve some degree of change to that culture. It is therefore important to commence with an understanding of that local culture, for this will indicate what things might require change, and others which might need to be retained or require greater emphasis.

Consideration of general principles of teaching and learning is also important. We are attempting to develop in students certain ideas, that is, understanding of important principles; accompanying affect - feelings about right and wrong; and behaviours which are consistent with the desired principles. One aspect of this teaching will be explanation, and this of course raises the question of the topics to be explained: the 'syllabus', which demonstrates the need to commence with the existing situation in the school, including a consideration of which principles and values, and what behaviours are considered by this school community to be important.

It is therefore suggested that the steps should be:

i) analysis of the present situation;

ii) specification of the values and principles to be taught; and

iii) developing methods of teaching.

## Methods of Teaching

### 1. *Explanation and Discussion*

Explanation will be one important aspect of the teaching process. The education literature indicates that schools have always been and continue to be, very much concerned about student behaviour, but how much time and emphasis has been given to explaining to students what behaviour is appropriate, and why that is the case? There is clearly need for explanation, but if it is to be effective, the explanation must be convincing to the students. They must be able to understand the principles and behaviours being described, so as in any other teaching situation it is important that the teachers understand the students' ideas concerning the topic. If for instance we are

dealing with the issue of noise in the classroom, what is the situation we consider desirable? But if we are to help students understand this position, we need to know how they think about this issue. It is likely therefore that explanation and discussion will need to go together. In the course of discussion and explanation teachers should aim not only to deal with the nature of the behaviours to be encouraged, but also to convey to students the relationship between these behaviours and the underlying principles and values.

An important reason for providing effective explanation is that it cannot be assumed that all students understand which behaviour is appropriate, and which is inappropriate. We frequently assume that children should know what is the right behaviour in a particular situation, but this is obviously not the case, so it must be explained, and explained in ways which are meaningful and attractive to them.

### 2. *Demonstration*

Obviously it is common knowledge that observational learning is powerful and helpful to learners: "show me'. It is therefore important for schools to devise ways of presenting students with examples of appropriate behaviour, and particularly if these examples can also be used to demonstrate the positive values underlying the behaviour. This principle can be applied in various ways. Examples of good behaviour can be drawn to the attention of students, but other possibilities may be available. Role playing is a strategy frequently employed to teach behavioural skills, and this could be used to demonstrate to students appropriate ways of behaving in various situations.

### 3. *Reinforcement*

Effective ways should be found for reinforcing appropriate behaviour. In attempting to do so it is important to be sensitive to student perceptions. Things which are intended to be positively reinforcing may not always be effective, depending upon how they are perceived by students. Teacher praise, for instance, may be acceptable to students in some circumstances, while in other situations it may cause a degree of embarrassment.

### 4. *Errors*

It is widely accepted in relation to academic learning that errors provide an excellent opportunity for helping students to learn the correct way of approaching the task at hand. Errors in the realm of social behaviour are seldom regarded in the same way. Rather than see misbehaviour as an opportunity for effective teaching and learning, we tend to regard such errors as frustrating and necessitating punishment. Imposing penalties may in fact be an important part of the teaching process, but it is important to attempt to approach errors as positively as possible, frustrating though the situation may be.

### 5. *Feedback*

Similarly it is well known in relation to academic learning that feedback is very important, and that it must be informative, helping the student to understand what was incorrect and how it can be improved. The same considerations apply in relation to

social behaviour, so in all aspects of the teaching and learning of appropriate social behaviour, provision of helpful, informative feedback is essential.

### 6. *The Learning Culture of the School*

Schools which are effective in relation to academic learning are successful in developing the acceptance by all members of their community that academic achievement is important. A similar emphasis and acceptance needs to be placed on appropriate social behaviour. We might therefore expect the school to devise ways of promoting academic achievement, sporting achievement, and also high regard for good behaviour. If we say that ethical and civilised behaviour is very important, we must back up the claim with action. Unfortunately the action has traditionally been limited and rather negative, focusing on punishment, whereas a more positive teaching approach is both possible and more desirable.

## Some suggestions for practical aspects of teaching good behaviour

The following are some suggestions of ways in which these principles might be put into practice, but this is where each school community must make their own plans.

### *Teaching important principles*

We might decide that one important principle which should underpin our behaviour policy is that we should all be helpful to other people. A competition could be held, giving individuals or classes the opportunity to devise ways of promoting important principles such as this, by mottoes, slogans, pictures, awards and so on. Part of the process should also be to draw attention to stating reasons why the particular principle is important. Some classes might like to devise a sketch, a song or some other artistic presentation illustrating the principle and demonstrating the reason for its importance.

### *Discussion*

One important method used in moral education has been the use of moral dilemma discussions. In this strategy a group of people are presented with a dilemma, usually a hypothetical situation, and are asked to discuss what the characters in the situation should do. There is considerable evidence that this strategy can produce increase in the level of moral reasoning of participants.

A further development from this approach has been the use of group meetings. Dilemma discussions characteristically deal with hypothetical issues, which may limit the effect of that strategy, whereas the group meeting approach deals with real issues in the experience of the participants. This strategy is used in numbers of schools and units which provide for behaviour disordered students. When something goes wrong, for instance if something is stolen from a classroom, all members of the group meet to discuss the situation and what action should be taken. This provides the opportunity for discussion of relevant basic principles and how these principles apply in the particular situation.

### *Use of literature and media*

Novels, plays, and films frequently present situations which could provide opportunity for discussion concerning essential moral principles.

### *Reinforcement*

Token reinforcement systems have been used in various situations, including schools, to promote appropriate behaviour. If a school community established a particularly attractive faciiity, access to this could be made dependent upon earning a number of points or tokens. For instance a games room housing table tennis, a pool table, or something similar could be the reinforcer. To use this facility at lunch times, students would be required to earn a number of tokens. Such programs need to be so arranged that it is possible for all students to earn sufficient tokens, and even those who usually are least well behaved should be helped to succeed. If everyone earns sufficient tokens there has to be a roster system in place to ensure that everyone gets a fair turn. These are some examples intended to promote further creative thinking. Each situation presents its own possibilities for devising effective ways of teaching the members of the school community.

## Counselling

Counselling is a professional activity which is aimed at helping the client to develop effective ways of dealing with demanding and perhaps disturbing experiences. The emphasis is on assisting clients to develop their own resources and skills. In this process clients develop better understanding of themselves and their situation and more mature functioning. Many children and adolescents who display inappropriate behaviour lack understanding and maturity. They do not understand why their behaviour is inappropriate, and in various ways they are functioning at relatively immature levels for their age. Counselling may therefore provide another useful way of promoting prosocial behaviour. It may also be a way of supporting teachers. Dealing with misbehaviour can be a stressful part of teachers' role, and counselling may be helpful in assisting teachers to cope with these demands.

## Supervision

It is widely recognised that supervision can be a useful way of ensuring appropriate outcomes. The supervision process does not necessarily involve only control. It can be quite a collegial process, which is desirable in many situations. In relation to behaviour management in the school setting, supervision can fulfil a number of important functions. Students who have limited capacity to behave appropriately are not left to rely entirely on their own resources and to take responsibility for their actions without some guidance and assistance. Supervision can provide support. Because supervision occurs in a real life situation for the students, it can provide excellent opportunities for following up teaching sessions. If for instance class sessions have dealt with an issue such as using polite language, this can be referred to and discussed when appropriate in the supervision situation. Issues which arise in supervision situations can also provide good opportunities for practice in moral

reasoning. And at a basic, but none the less important level, supervision provides opportunity for data collection - for keeping informed about what is going on. Following from this it is obviously important for information obtained during supervision to be used constructively. For instance problems should be dealt with promptly, before they are allowed to develop into major crises.

Therefore, for several reasons supervision can be seen to be an important part of behaviour management, and should be regarded as such. Adequate time and resources should be made available for supervision, and measures taken to ensure that the potential of supervisory activities is used effectively. A key issue is probably that supervision be perceived by both teachers and students as a constructive and helpful process, rather than being regarded simply as a chore and having a negative authoritarian image.

### *Practical implications*

It would be useful to carry out an analysis of supervision in the school community, addressing questions including:

1. Where and when does supervision occur at present?

   eg. playground duty; in classrooms; etc.

2. Would additional supervision be helpful?

   eg. are there 'trouble spots or times' in the school which are not adequately supervised.

3. What resources are used for supervision, and what resources are available?
4. Can supervision tasks be reduced?
5. How is supervision used to complement teaching, and can this be improved.

## Control

Unfortunately approaches to behaviour management sometimes place too much emphasis on control. It is extremely difficult to control human beings, and probably undesirable anyhow. The aim of any society surely is that individuals will behave appropriately themselves; they will have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to behave in a prosocial manner and they will want to behave in this way. However there is also evidence which indicates that our behaviour is influenced by external factors such as penalties for committing offences. Therefore there is need for control measures of various types, but these should be part of a whole process designed to encourage appropriate behaviour.

Control can be seen to have two components; one involves preventing or stopping certain behaviour; the other consists of attempts to make people perform certain behaviours. It is possible to prevent or stop people doing certain things, though in some cases this might necessitate taking action which in itself is inappropriate. What would it take, for instance, to stop an adolescent leaving home at night after the family goes to bed, to going partying with friends? On the other hand, making people do

something which they do not want to do is virtually impossible, and again attempts to force people to do things frequently involve the use of quite unacceptable methods.

For schools this means that control is a difficult issue, but none the less provision must be made for control strategies in some situations. Students obviously cannot be allowed to injure other people; any indications of such behaviour should quickly lead to the implementation of control strategies. Measures taken to control behaviour if successful, have the direct effect of stopping the inappropriate target behaviour or of producing appropriate behaviour. However control measures have another important effect; they convey important messages to all members of the community: that the issue in question is important, because we do something about it. If students riot in class and no attempt is made to put a stop to the riotous behaviour, it is understandable that some students will draw the conclusion that 'it doesn't matter'. Because authority should be based on principles reflecting high levels of moral reasoning, control methods must be consistent with those principles. Factors in the local situation are also very important, so the details of control strategies need to be worked out by the members of each school community. The following are therefore intended as important general principles concerning control measures.

Measures designed to control behaviour bear upon the relationship between the group and the individual. To be consistent with moral and ethical principles, both the group and the individual should benefit from the control measures. One implication of this principle is that prevention should be an important aim. We should attempt to intervene at an early stage before a student becomes involved in serious problem behaviour. A further implication is that rehabilitation is essential. Students who display inappropriate behaviour should be taught and encouraged to develop appropriate behaviour. In turn, an implication of this principle is that control measures should be as constructive as possible. Measures which belittle students who have done the wrong thing should be avoided as much as possible. The message conveyed by any measures should be that the inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, but that at the same time everything possible will be done to help offenders reinstate themselves. This in turn indicates again the need for control measures to be accompanied by educative strategies designed to teach the offender how to behave appropriately. Justice is a very important issue in relation to control measures. There is considerable evidence indicating that individuals accept authority and disciplinary measures if these measures are seen to be fair. This in turn raises the question of what measures are considered to be fair by the student group, which indicates that students should be well informed about the rules, and the consequences of breaking rules, and what measures will be taken in the event of inappropriate behaviour occurring. The 'legal' system within the school should be understood by all members of the school community, including students and parents, and every effort should be made to ensure that this system is perceived to be fair. This suggests that information should be disseminated to and discussed with all members of the school community. Another related factor which influences the acceptance of authority is that individuals must perceive that there is a place for them in that community. Individuals need to feel accepted in the group. They are unlikely to accept the authority of a group from which they feel rejected. This obviously presents a problem in the case of difficult offenders. It is fairly natural to want to exclude them from the group. But if that happens they are

unlikely to be inclined to accept the authority which operates in that group. This is another reason for taking action before problems become too severe.

A variety of strategies may be used as controls on behaviour while at the same time meeting the requirements indicated above. A simple yet none the less important control strategy is the use of an instruction: 'Billy, pay attention to your work'. A number of factors influence the effectiveness of instructions such as this, and it would be useful to spend some time considering these factors. Establishing appropriate physical arrangements can be a useful control strategy, in part because physical arrangements can influence the probabilities of certain behaviour occurring. Children who talk too much in class have less opportunity to do so if they are somewhat removed from others in the classroom, or if they are closely supervised. The physical arrangements might need to include rooms where students can be isolated from others while they complete their work. To deal with or to prevent problem behaviours it is sometimes helpful to remove certain individuals from a particular situation. For instance if a student is being difficult in a particular class, it may be useful to remove that student when instructions have been given with which the student fails to comply. An important issue here is the actual method of removing the individual. The use of physical force is not appropriate; the individual must be instructed and required to move so it is important that the school have in place some arrangements to ensure that the individual can be removed without causing an undesirable incident. Like other control measures, strategies for requiring students to move from place to place will convey important messages to the offender and also to other students.

An effective procedure will convey to all students that the school can maintain suitable conditions for teaching and learning. The difficult student will be controlled, but this will be done in a dignified way which conveys to the student that the intention is to help him or her, and to minimise distress for everyone, including the offender.

One component of control strategies will be punishment, penalties or consequences for inappropriate behaviour. A basic principle here is that it is not the severity, but certainty of punishment, which makes it effective. As with other aspects of control strategies, punishment conveys messages; these should be that the inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, but also that every endeavour will be made to help the offender develop in desirable ways. Therefore the actual nature of punishment should be carefully considered. Restitution is a sound general principle. The offender has caused a problem, he or she should repair any damage and compensate other people for inconvenience. In this way emphasis can be placed on working towards positive outcomes.

Time out from positive reinforcement and response cost are two strategies coming from a behavioural approach for which there is considerable support. In the former, individuals normally have the opportunity of receiving positive reinforcement, but when inappropriate behaviour is displayed, they lose the opportunity of receiving positive reinforcement until appropriate behaviour is again demonstrated. Response cost involves losing positive reinforcers which have previously been awarded, as a result of inappropriate behaviours. Traffic fines are an example. In both strategies it is essential that all individuals are normally in receipt of positive reinforcers.

The details of any of these control strategies must be carefully arranged in the particular school situation, and the strategies used consistently as arranged.

## Relationships in the school situation

Various programs of behaviour management can be set in place, but whatever the organisational arrangements a crucial aspect of any behaviour management program has to do with the relationship between the representatives of authority and the subordinates. In the school situation individual teachers must be skilful in relating to students. The nature of this relationship can be considered to involve six key elements. First the teacher needs sound awareness of the present situation. Many factors can influence student behaviour: physical conditions, including weather conditions; activities of that day, both before the present situation and those which are anticipated later; the expectations which have developed in the particular class; habits which have developed; the social relationships in the group, and relationships between members of this group and others outside the group; the work to be dealt with; as well as the skills, level of development and other characteristics of both students and teacher. The teacher needs to be aware of all such factors which may influence student behaviour.

The second essential factor is understanding, which here is used in the cognitive sense. We often use this term to mean something like 'consideration/sympathy/kindness.' While these are important, understanding in the sense of knowing about, is essential to effective relationships. Teachers need to understand what is going on in the heads and hearts of the students. How does this child/adolescent conceptualise the situation? How does he/she feel about it? Why might the student be behaving in that particular way? Understanding in these ways is essential on the part of the teacher, but the need for understanding also applies to students. An important aim of behaviour management programs is to help students understand the nature of and reasons for prosocial behaviour. Individual teachers must also attempt to ensure that students understand the teacher's position. Why does the teacher ask students to behave in particular ways and not others or to value certain principles?

The third factor is commitment to the relationship. Commitment is an important characteristic of all types of significant relationships, such as friendships and family relationships. Effective teachers have a strong commitment to their students, being determined to ensure that these students will benefit from the learning experiences in their class. If teachers are to promote prosocial behaviour in children, this commitment must include student's social development as well as academic learning. The definition of education is relevant. Interest in effective behaviour management implies that education includes promoting the social and personal development of students. The issue of commitment is particularly important in the case of difficult students. If we want these students to accept the principles and values we consider important, we must demonstrate to them that there is a place for them in the school community. At the same time we cannot accept their inappropriate behaviour. In this situation difficult students often conclude that they are rejected. A teacher's commitment to the relationship with that student is an important factor which can reduce this perception of being rejected. The message conveyed to the student is very

important, and in the context of a strong commitment to the relationship this message can be something like, "you've done the wrong thing, we don't approve, but we do want you to learn the right way to behave; we want the future to be good for you". Such a positive commitment to the relationship with even difficult students is indicated by the question, "what can we do for this boy". The person who was often heard to ask this question was an excellent and committed teacher. The question conveyed the teachers' genuine desire to help that student whose behaviour had caused such frustration.

This leads to consideration of the fourth factor, which can be termed simply, good will. The essential aim of the behaviour management program, as previously explained, is to get students to accept certain principles and values which the school believes to be important, and to use these principles to direct their behaviour. If students are to accept the principles which the teacher represents, they need to perceive that the teacher is well meaning towards them. This is related to the issue of students perceiving that there is a place for them in that school community. The teacher's expression of positive, constructive aims for the student, even in the event of inappropriate behaviour and punishment, may convey the message that the student, though not the inappropriate behaviour, is still accepted.

Awareness of the influences from the wider situation, deep understanding of the students' thoughts and feelings, commitment, and positive regard or good will, should produce a meaningful relationship between teacher and student, but teachers may reasonably ask, "What do we do now?" A good relationship is desirable, and that is fine in the case of good co-operative students, but we need to do more than establish a good relationship. The behaviour management process is intended to change the inappropriate behaviour of poorly adjusted students. This leads us to a consideration of the fifth relationship factor, which is communication. Different students have developed a range of inappropriate behaviours, and underlying these behaviours are a set of ideas and feelings, or schemata in cognitive terms, which are related to the inappropriate behaviours. The intent of behaviour management programs is to effect changes both in the overt behaviour and in the schemata - the related concepts and affect. To achieve this will require very effective persuasive communication. This communication should be at the very centre of the behaviour management program. The aim of the communication is quite simple. We want to convey to students that, "These values and principles - like honesty, kindness etc - are essential and they should direct our behaviour. Some things you are doing and some of the ideas you have are not consistent with these principles, and we will help you to change". Actually being successful in this communication may not of course be as simple, but some basic principles of communication are relevant. The teacher needs to understand the students incorrect position. He or she must convey the ideas in language that the student can understand. Other non-verbal aspects of the communication must support the message. The student must see some sense in what is being said, and he or she must come to understand that the position the teacher is presenting has advantages for him or herself and for other people. The student must come to understand the moral arguments.

It is unlikely that the teacher's 'message' can be conveyed successfully in one or even in a series of talk sessions. Effective communication will probably involve a long series of interactions, involving both verbal and non verbal exchanges. It is important for the teacher to be aware of the progress of this ongoing communication. It is useful to regularly ask oneself, 'Where am I at in the communication with x. What are his/her ideas and feelings about the topic now; how does that compare to my position?"

Other aspects of the behaviour management program, such as rules, lessons, organisational procedures and penalties should complement and support this communication process. In particular the matter of confrontation requires careful consideration. In some sense inappropriate ideas and behaviours must be confronted, but this needs to be done sensitively if the student is to change his or her position and accept the teacher's position on the issue.

## What type of relationship?

In considering these various relationship issues it is important also to think about the general nature of the teacher - student relationship. What is the model for this relationship; what is, or should it, be like? One idea has been based on the 'in loco parentis' argument: the teacher - student relationship is similar to the parent - child relationship. Or similarly emphasis is sometimes placed on friendliness - being a friend to the student. These positions have problems, because it will frequently be the case that despite the teacher's best efforts, some students will not respond positively, which can be quite distressing for a teacher who conceptualises the relationship as being similar to that with a child or a friend. This expectation is probably unrealistic. The teacher - student relationship should be warm, considerate and supportive, but the most suitable approach is to think of it in terms of a warm, supportive ethical professional relationship, which involves rather less direct emotional involvement that is the case with close friend or family relationships.

## Organisational Arrangements

All aspects of a behaviour management program obviously have some implications for school organisation. Teaching programs concerning appropriate behaviour, discussion groups and conselling will all require organisation, but the focus in this section will be on ogranisational arrangements concerning the collection and use of data and the planning and implementation of interventions.

## Information

Data is very important in a behaviour management program for several reasons. We make decisions which can have very important effects on the future development and life experience of students. These decisions should, for both practical and ethical reaons; be based on accurate and comprehensive data. If this is not the case, we run the risk of making such decisions on the basis of inaccurate impressions. We use

various intervention strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour. These strategies should be monitored and evaluated, and to do this accurate data is necessary. There are also other reasons for having suitable data available, relating to planning, budgeting, and quality management. The details of which information should be collected, stored and made available, and how this will be done is a matter for individual school communities. Some suggestions will be made concerning general principles which should be considered.

## Recording and Using Information

Teachers are known to be quite good at identifying problematic behaviour of different types, so if there are students in a school who demonstrate some indication of adjustment difficulties, it is very likely that some member or members of staff will be aware of this. However this knowledge is not always recorded and made available to other members of staff who could perhaps be helped by having access to that information. There are understandable reasons for this, including the fact that schools are busy and complex places. Therefore it would be useful to have a system in place which provided for the recording of information relevant to student adjustment difficulties, and associated with this a system for making this information available to appropriate members of staff. Some schools have used a system of form teachers who have responsibility for these tasks. Other teachers know to whom information concerning a particular student should be conveyed, and from whom information may be obtained. This is one arrangement; others are possible and may be more suitable depending on the particular situation.

One important issue regarding information is that different information requires different responses. Some indicates that urgent action is essential; other information is potentially important, but is of a type which will contribute to understanding over a longer time, and various other categories of information can be suggested. It would therefore appear to be important to have clearly understood ways of handling different types of information. For instance it might be considered important that some types of information be transmitted immediately to the school's central administration.

It is therefore suggested that the school's behaviour management plan should give careful consideration to this matter of information: what information should be collected; how this is to be done; how will information be stored; what categories will be used in information processing; to whom will different types of information be transmitted?

## Problems and Issues

Some of the information will describe problems and issues which obviously need to be dealt with. In any planning process it is important to have a clear understanding of the issues to be dealt with, and this is obviously an important issue for consideration in behaviour management programs. What are the behaviour problems which occur in this school, how frequently do they occur, how many students are involved? These

and related questions would seem to be fundamental to planning effective interventions.

## Interventions

The descriptions of types of problems and issues which require attention will provide a basis for planning general types of interventions, though each individual case has its own peculiarities and provision must also be made to cater for these when planning and deciding what should be done in response to identified problems. However it is likely to be useful to have a range of interventions planned, which provide an appropriate response for the various problems and issues previously described, with the understanding that adjustments will be made to meet the needs of individual cases.

It may be useful to think about interventions in terms of the following categories, which overlap as indicated in Fig 1: prevention; treatment; immediate; medium term; long term; group; and individual.

This analysis is useful for various reasons, including resource considerations. If, for instance provision can be made for a group of students this may be more efficient than providing for each individually.

*Fig. 1* *TYPES OF INTERVENTION*

| | | **immediate** | **medium term** | **long term** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **preventive (proactive)** | *group* | | | |
| | *individual* | | | |
| **treatment (response)** | *group* | | | |
| | *individual* | | | |

This approach to behaviour management is suggesting that interventions can be developed using the four general approaches previously described: teaching, counselling, supervision and control; and with the additional recognition that the important dimensions of relationship also previously described, must be taken into account. It is also an important part of this approach that the essential aim of all interventions is to engender respect for those principles which the school community believes should direct behaviour, or in brief, respect for authority. Therefore another important aim of intervention is the communication that these principles are the things which should guide behaviour, and that the representatives of authority are intent on helping students to comprehend and accept this position. Strategies which control student behaviour will be necessary, but they must also be accompanied by attempts at persuasion.

## Practical implementation of interventions

Many problem behaviours can be addressed in several ways; some intended as prevention, some as treatment; some immediate, some longer term; some providing for individuals, some involving groups. For instance one problem may be the issue of students speaking abusively to teachers This issue could be dealt with in teaching programs and discussion groups, and by means of supervision and the use of control procedures.

Some interventions require planning of a program to be implemented over a period of time; an example would be a teaching program dealing with communicating appropriately with teachers. Planning and implementing programs such as this will take time and resources but this is probably not a very stressful or frustrating process for staff. It would seem that much of the difficulty experienced by teachers in regard to behaviour management concerns unpleasant and disrupting behaviour, such as the use by a student of abusive language addressed to a teacher. This is one example, but many problem behaviours can be included in this category: they are unpleasant, or even dangerous; they disrupt appropriate school activities; and they are aimed either at other people, whether teachers or other students, or at property. A range of medium or long term interventions involving teaching, counselling and supervision can be devised to provide for students displaying behaviours such as these, but in the immediate situation the teacher or teachers involved must have some effective response readily available. The particular nature of the response will depend on a range of factors in the situation, and therefore appropriate responses must be planned by those in that situation, and even given careful planning, the individual teacher's professional judgement will play an important part. However some general issues can be suggested for consideration.

## Some issues for consideration in dealing with unpleasant, disruptive behaviours.

In relation to behaviours such as these, a number of priorities can be identified.

### Danger

If there is danger to persons or property, a first priority must be security, and it seems natural to think in terms of physical force. However, this is not the only or best way of dealing with dangerous and threatening behaviours. For instance police officers dealing with very dangerous situations often use 'talking down' strategies to good effect, and these would seem to be appropriate in the school situation. In general terms these strategies involve attempts to engage the offender in conversation. Confrontation is avoided. The offender is demonstrating challenging behaviour; the negotiator avoids meeting this challenge with similar behaviour. The negotiator attempts to express understanding of the offender's position, without expressing support for the offensive behaviour, and attempts to suggest, and interest the offender in, alternative ways of proceeding. In various situations, people dealing with

confronting and dangerous behaviours also have access to previously arranged emergency measures involving calling for support.

These general approaches would seem to suggest useful ways of responding to unpleasant disruptive behaviours in the school situation. Safety and security should be given priority, so it can be suggested that provision should be made for emergency alerting procedures by which a teacher can call for and receive appropriate support very promptly. The second general principle is that the teacher should not respond in kind to the challenge presented by the disruptive behaviour. There is a tradition in our education system which makes teachers feel obliged to maintain the dominant position at all times; this may not be the most helpful thing to do; the longer term maintenance of an effective teaching - learning environment may be the more important issue to focus on. It is obvious however that a disrupting situation must be terminated as quickly as possible.

## Dealing with disruptive behaviours

### 1. The long term goal

It is important to consider long term goals so as to ensure that immediate action contributes as much as possible to the long term goals. These have been discussed previously, and include maintaining communication, encouraging respect for authority, and the preservation of a constructive teaching - learning environment.

### 2. The short term goals

Short term goals require on-going consideration, but can be considered to include: stopping the disruption; restoring an appropriate teaching - learning situation; maintaining relationship with the offender/s so that constructive follow-up action can be taken; conveying appropriate messages both to the offender/s and other students.

### 3. Immediate action

Unpleasant disruptive behaviours can be dealt with in a variety of ways: which responses are most effective in terms of both short and long terms goals? Several possibilities will be suggested, but this must be an issue for on-going consideration and professional judgement.

*3.1 Instruction to stop*

One reasonable option in the event of any inappropriate behaviour is to instruct the offender to stop the inappropriate behaviour. Several important conditions should be considered:

i) It is obviously important to establish relationship contact with the offender, and to do this in a way which is likely to encourage the offender to listen and to obey the instruction. Non-verbal and para-verbal factors will be important. These include physical stance, facial expression, tone of voice and volume. The precise nature of the

verbal content may also be very important. Using the person's name will help to make meaningful contact.

ii) The precise nature of the instruction is also important. The person must understand the instruction. Previous teaching is an important factor. Even poorly adjusted students are more likely to respond appropriately to an instruction which has previously been taught to them and discussed with them.

iii) The overall context is also important. The student is more likely to obey the instruction if he or she is conversant with the context and the instruction is a generally approved instruction for that context. Prior teaching is also relevant in regards to this issue. For instance if procedures for getting out materials for a particular activity have been taught and explained, an instruction issued in the context of these procedures is likely to be understood.

*3.2 Instruction to behave appropriately*

It is generally accepted that instructions should provide a cue for appropriate behaviour, so while it may be important to instruct a student to stop inappropriate behaviour, it is also important to make clear what behaviour is appropriate. It is also useful to give some explanation as to why the behaviour is appropriate, and once again, prior teaching concerning the issue can be referred to.

*3.3 Question*

One should be careful about using questions in the event of inappropriate behaviour, because they can lead to long and unprofitable debates about 'who did what'. So questions which focus on the immediate behaviour may not be particularly helpful - such as 'why are you hitting Jack? However, questions which attempt to gain information concerning the underlying conditions may prove a useful way of diverting attention away from the immediate problem behaviour, and of providing opportunities for assisting the offender to deal more constructively with his/her situation. This approach is based on the assumption that inappropriate behaviour occurs because the individual is unable to perform the appropriate behaviour, or experiences great difficulty in doing so, or alternatively because he/she does not want to behave appropriately - is not motivated to do so, and this situation presents a very important question. Why does this student not want to behave in the appropriate way? One can be almost certain that it will **not** be helpful to ask the offender this question directly. However, it may be possible to get at the reasons by asking questions concerning related issues which the student is likely to answer, and for this purpose a question concerning the difficulty of the set task may be useful. For instance if a student is misbehaving and the set tasks involves some mathematics, it may be useful to ask how the student is finding the maths.

This strategy incorporates several principles, the teacher is:

i) making use of her/his awareness of the whole situation;

ii) diverting attention away from the problem behaviour, but without forgetting about it;

iii) attempting to understand the student's thoughts and feelings which may be associated with the problem behaviour;

vi) attempting to maintain positive relationship contact with the student, and to offer assistance to the student;

v) communicating to both the offender and other students the intent to deal with problematic issues while at the same time offering assistance to the student.

*3.4 Removal of student*

It is generally recognised that there are potential problems in removing a difficult student from the classroom. In behavioural terms this may be precisely what the student prefers and may therefore constitute positive reinforcement, and there may be other difficulties. However in certain situations, and given certain provisos, removing a student may be helpful to all. An important consideration is the message conveyed concerning classroom activities. It should be well established and clearly understood by all in the school, that the classroom is devoted to teaching and learning and therefore inappropriate and disruptive behaviour is not tolerated. This is a very important consideration because it is obvious that human behaviour can be very much influenced by the beliefs, values and principles which have been adopted by a community or culture concerning particular locations and activities. It is therefore important to develop in the school a strong consensus that the classroom is devoted to effective teaching - learning activities. It must be recognised, however, that if this position is to be adopted and endorsed by the majority of students, the position must be presented in positive and meaningful ways. If removal of a student is to be considered as one possible option, the criteria which apply and the means of arranging this should be clearly understood by both staff and students as part of the normal school arrangements.

*3.5 Arranging follow-up*

Whatever immediate action is taken to deal with inappropriate behaviour, the possibility of follow-up action should be considered (see below).

*3.6 Other strategies*

Obviously there are a range of other immediate strategies which can be used to deal with inappropriate behaviour, such as changing the class activity, or requiring the difficult student to change seating position. It is useful to have opportunity to discuss these various strategies with colleagues; when doing so it is important to consider details of the particular situation. A strategy which is effective in one situation may not be satisfactory in another situation. It will also be useful to consider the long and short-term goals and other considerations previously discussed.

The issue of punishment or penalties has not been included in this section dealing with immediate action, because it is considered that this can be handled more effectively at the follow-up stage. However this is also an issue for local decision and individual teachers professional judgement.

## 4. Follow Up Action

Any instance of inappropriate behaviour should be considered as possibly requiring not only immediate action, but also follow-up action. This approach to behaviour

management is based on cognitive principles, the aim being to help members of the school community develop acceptance of prosocial values and principles. This will be an ongoing process. The immediate action taken to control inappropriate behaviour will play an important part in this process, but it is unlikely that any immediate action will be sufficient by itself to bring about understanding and acceptance of the relevant concepts and values.

Planning appropriate types of follow-up action should be an important part of the behaviour management program. These follow-up strategies could involve aspects of all four processes which are basic to this approach: teaching, counselling, supervision and control. A very important consideration is the essential aim of any strategies, namely to help all students, including the immediate offender, internalise the principles endorsed by the school community, and to ensure that these principles come to direct behaviour. This process may include the use of punishment or penalties, an aspect of the control item, but should certainly not be confined to this.

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